

# Heber Valley Snow Levels Atop Roofs Causing Strain of Buildings, Barns

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Wasatch Correspondent

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MIDWAY — Old man winter has left his mark on the snowy tops of Heber valley, not only on mountain tops but also on rooftops. Well, at least they used to be roof tops. It is evident everywhere, that the weight of accumulated snow is deceptively heavy.

## Wasatch County

Take for example, the old Midway Schoolhouse — a picturesque landmark since 1912. Built of native pot rock, the edifice served as an educational arena until 1975, when the new Midway elementary school was opened.

Sadly, the old building became more of a liability than an asset to the town. However, it was useful on occasions for such activities as dance classes and art shows. The boy scouts even built canoes in it, but virtually it was used as a storage area of paraphernalia for Swiss Days, according to town councilman, Grant Shelton.

Town boards over the years have been loath to discuss the future of the building because of its sentimental attachment. But that decision was made for the city fathers last week when the whole back section of the roof caved in due to the heavy snow. Now the problem is safety. "The collapse of the roof jarred the second floor to such an extent that it bowed out the north wall," Mr. Shelton said, "making it impossible to repair."



Old School House Building roof has caved in from weight of snow.

The town will meet Friday to discuss what must be done, but one thing is quite certain — the old building cannot remain in its present condition. Mr. Shelton remarked, "It

would have been difficult to take it down before this happened. It's something we would have to deal with eventually, but we knew it would cause a lot of feelings."

As it is, the pot rock from the landmark could probably still be standing in years, he indicated, in the form of new city offices and town meeting hall.



## Commending School District

Dear Editor:

We wish to commend the Wasatch County School District for its sound educational practices and outstanding educators. A system for education is only as good as its teachers and administrators. Our experience with the school system in the Heber Valley has been exclusively positive in nature and act.

Our family recently had the opportunity to spend more than two of this past winter's months in the state of Alabama. With some reservations, we determined the social, cultural and regional experiences to be gained outweighed the inconvenience and possible negative effects of a change in school systems, academic requirements and the loss of associated support systems.

The experience of attending school in an unfamiliar environment was enlightening. We were favorably impressed with the new school district's facilities and the credentials of the associated faculties and staff.

We were negatively impressed, however, with the implemented plan for bussing students to maintain required integration ratios and dismayed with the generally low morale and collective uncaring attitude in the classroom. Students and teachers alike, were not excited about learning. There seemed to be a strained and forced pervasion in

each of the schools.

We're confident that our four children, ranging in age from seven to fourteen, are fairly typical in intellectual ability, personality and emotional resilience. We've also found them to be emotionally fragile when least expected. A careless word or act can be highly destructive to youth anywhere. We have vicariously experienced encouragement, understanding and disciplined learning through our children's Wasatch County educational experience. Unfortunately, we cannot express the same sentiment concerning the Alabama experiment.

The trip was a success. We're all better for the travel, sights, history and the encounter with Americana. We are, after all, at least partly, the products of that which we are exposed. We all agree that the journey was worthwhile. We are, likewise, all in agreement that the care and enthusiasm accompanying the skills and knowledge imparted at the Wasatch Middle School and the J.R. Smith Elementary School is exemplary.

Thank you, Mr. Earl Dayton, Mr. Edward McAfee, Ms. Rhonda Earl, Ms. DeAnna Lloyd and Mrs. Vickie Todd at J.R. Smith and thanks Mr. Bill Dudley and faculty at Wasatch Middle School. We are sincerely grateful.

Stephen and Regena Jackson

## Condem Old Midway School?

Dear Sirs:

The old Midway School suffered extensive damage this winter and is no longer safe or usable. The Midway City government made the decision that the building could not be practically salvaged and should be demolished. As a result of this decision city officials have been subjected to threatening and abusive letters and calls.

There is little question the building holds great sentimental value to many residents of the valley and no question at all of its historical significance (it is listed on the National Register of Historic Landmarks). There is also little question that restoration of the building would be a major project and beyond the financial capability of the City of Midway alone. The building was insured and there is a fair sum from that but not enough. The issue of future use and maintenance remains unresolved, however, and must be considered. A number of uses have been proposed for the building including new city offices.

To investigate the possibilities for restoration of the old school for the board of the Midway Boosters, we spoke to two state agencies and to city officials and interested parties. What we found was total agreement that if there were a practical way to save, use and maintain the building it should be done.

We found much disagreement as to what was necessary to accomplish this and whether it was possible. Since restorations in-

volve highly specialized architectural and engineering decisions they can be very difficult. The architect from the Heritage Foundation (a private group dedicated to preservation) has already looked at the building and feels it is reasonable to save it. The Utah State Historical Society (a state governmental agency) is neutral on any decision on the fate of a building but has offered to send a staff member to attend meetings and offer expert advice. Both agencies could help find the necessary money.

One important question remains. Do the people of Midway want the old school saved? As things are now, the decision to destroy the building stands and plans are to demolish it within the next two weeks. Both state agencies are waiting for an invitation from the Midway City government to attend a meeting and outline what they have to offer. Irrate phone calls, angry letters and threats of law suits are not the way to settle this. If you want the building saved let the city officials know, nicely. If you have ideas on how to do it or are willing to help, tell them that, too.

We don't know if it is reasonable or even possible to save the old Midway School, but because of the controversy, we feel the city government should review its decision after listening to the experts, the wishes of the citizens and the same practical opinions that led to their original decision.

Sincerely,  
Drs. Bill and Kitty Ferguson

## Salvage Midway School

We are really surprised and disappointed about your recent decision to demolish the historical schoolhouse here in Midway.

There should be other alternatives to destruction, such as tearing down the bad corner and rebuilding the rest, OR gutting the inside and remodeling, OR the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers assuming responsibility for planning the renovation of the site as a museum, OR ???

It's our understanding that the people of Midway did not have a say as to what would happen to the school. Failure to have open discussion relative to community affairs undoubtedly would result in a loss of support for the mayor,

the city councilmen and the leaders of the community.

Because of the school's historical importance, we recommend a "TOWN MEETING" so ALL interested residents, including the pioneer families, would have a chance for input towards the final decision. At this meeting the appropriate experts should be in attendance so that a just and fair decision could be made.

For the sake of all concerned, we urge YOU, THE CITIZENS OF THIS COMMUNITY, to consider the contents of this letter SERIOUSLY, before IRREPARABLE DAMAGE occurs.

Yours for a BETTER MIDWAY,

Concerned Citizens



# Decisions Left to Community Citizens

*Wave 3 May 1984*

Midway Citizens are faced with a serious problem. A historical building, the Old Midway Schoolhouse, collapsed, and now the community is faced with the dilemma of whether to repair or destroy the building.

Historic buildings add to the color and character and show the past heritage which made the community and its people. The Midway School holds such a heritage for the citizens of the town.

There is a movement not to let the past fade away, and as such a community effort is now underway to save the historic old building. Renovating and improving the present condition in order to make it, once again, an attractive and presentable representative of the community.

There is also another train of thought on the building. It is stated that there is too much work to repair the building, more than the cost of constructing a new one. This same thought is that the building is in such a devastated condition that there would never be enough monies donated to get it into a useable condition.

Architectural and structural changes would have to be considered along with heating and insulation problems investigated. They also argue the cost of destroying the building will place the city in debt, as special equipment and crews will have to be used to tear down the two story structure.

There are truly two sides to this issue. We feel that the people of Midway must think about the commitment they will have to make, and the effect that either course of action will have on the community. We feel that those who are interested should come out to the meeting tonight, May 3, and participate in the decision. If it is decided to reconstruct the building, make sure that there is total commitment, and onto half a committed town, which will only succeed in creating a monument to a lack of action.

If the town can rally behind the effort to restore the school then a gift of untold value will be left future generations. Weigh your actions carefully as you now set the course that your town will set.





# Fate of Midway School Decided Tonight

## Meeting Starts at 6:30

Midway residents will have the opportunity to voice their views on whether or not the old Midway School will be demolished, at a meeting scheduled for May 3, 1984 at 6:30 p.m. in the Midway Town Hall.

The roof on the building collapsed in March from the heavy snows, causing extensive damage to the structure. The Council will consider the pro's and con's on the matter to determine if there is reason to recind a motion to demolish the building.

One important question remains. Do the people of Midway want the old school building?

There is a understanding that the boosters club is trying to rally the people of Midway to take of the restoration of the building, making it more than just an eye-sore to the community.

Dr. Kitty Ferguson has been appointed by the Boosters to examine the possiblities of restoring the building. They will present some of their findings at this meeting.

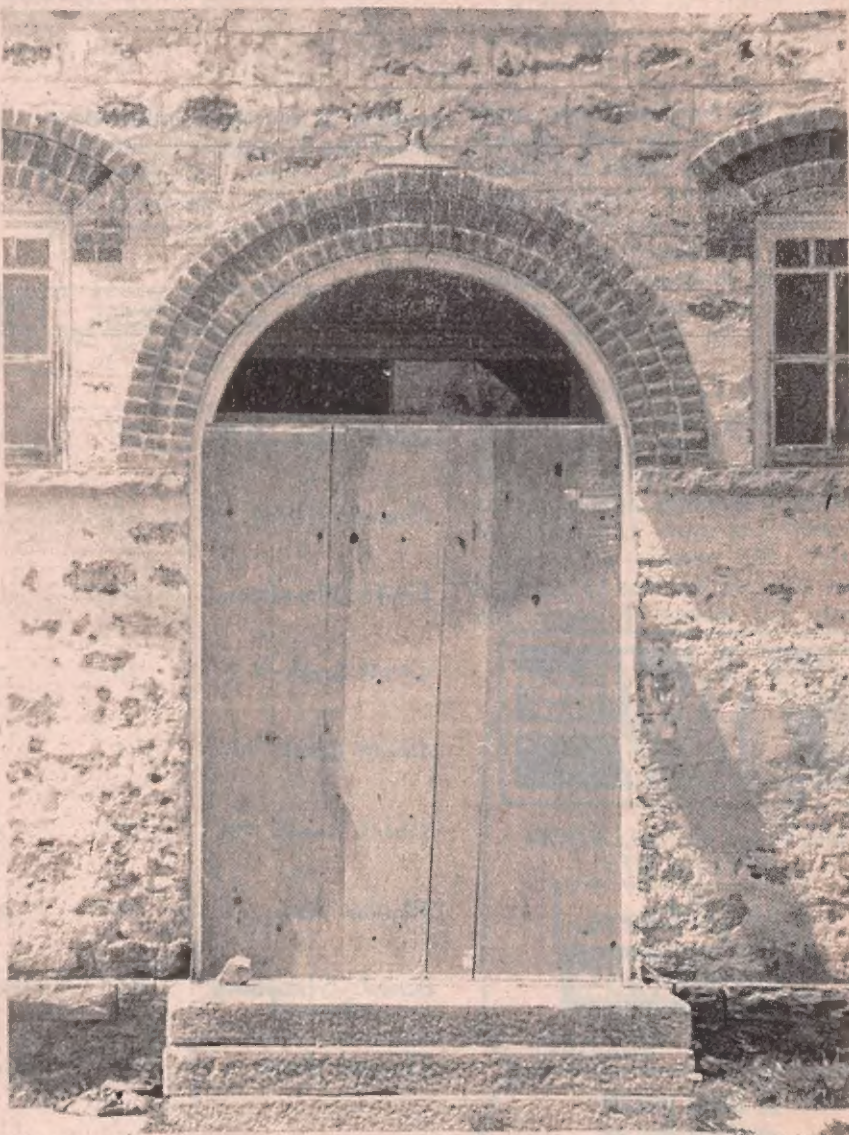
This meeting is open to all the public, and those who are interested should attend.

The building is registered with the State Historical Society, and would be a great benefit to the community if it could be saved. The only other option is to take the building down, removing a hazard from the community.

Midway City Councilmen all feel that they would like to act in the best interest of the community

they serve. They are at a standstill about knowing what to do with

this building, and encourage you to come out an attend the meeting.



The Old Midway School Building is boarded up. It is now under the consideration of the City Council as to what will happen to the historic building.

Midway City Councilmen were asked for their opinions. Billie Mair said "I think if this building is brought back up, and only used half the time, it will deteriorate, and we'd be right back where we are now."

When it was asked that a straw poll be taken, there were numerous objections against such an idea. Grant Shelton said, "If we make it a vote, we should let the people decide in an election."

City Councilmen Alan Giles wondered if the people would like to spend the 20 thousand in a study of the building or would they like to use the money elsewhere. He was undecided as to what to do.

The City Council would decide after the facts had been studied which were presented at the meeting. But as it was before the meeting, the City Council had no real cut and dried answer for the people.



# Is Decision of Old Midway School Right?

Wave 10 May 1984

Dear Editor:

We have been accused of being outsiders, of being the only people interested in saving the Old Midway School and of disregarding the financial limits of the City of Midway. First, we consider ourselves newcomers but not outsiders and there should be a difference. Second, most of the people we have talked to have said they would want the old building saved if there were a practical way to do it. (We wish more of them would speak up!) Third, we were trying to help by looking for affordable alternate solutions.

We personally feel the old

school has both aesthetic and economic value to the community. The building could be used for anything the city wanted, i.e. city offices, library, local handicraft shop, meeting rooms, commercial rental space, etc. However, if the citizens of Midway really do not want the old building under any circumstances then we agree, it's time to call for the bulldozer. If the majority of citizens of Midway would like to keep and use the building but don't believe it is financially possible, then there is reason to delay demolition until the question is answered.

Rehabilitation of historic buildings is a highly specialized field quite different from modern

construction. Just as specialists are sometimes needed for the best care of a human patient, they are also needed for certain buildings. For example, there is concern about the safety of the building as is. A specialist in restoration of old buildings stated the building is not a danger to the public as long as the windows are boarded to prevent entry. The pressure is off the walls so they are stable.

There is a possibility the old school could be saved at no cost what-so-ever to the people of Midway. A private firm has offered to provide a study for free to determine whether this can be done. Federal matching grant money is also available to do such a study.

Our original goal was to investigate the possibilities for obtaining outside help for restoring the old Midway School. We were asked to do this by the Midway Boosters. The preliminary information is available. It's now up to the people of Midway. Do we destroy the building now or do we take time to look at the choices?

Drs. Bill and Kitty Ferguson